



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS REGULATION

POWER FACILITY EVALUATION COUNCIL

Petition No. 65

March 10, 1981

Sarah Bates, Colin Tait, Duncan Reid, and Christopher Wood met Dorian Hill and Jerry Thompson of Northeast Utilities to review a proposed rebuilding project of an existing 115 kV transmission line for Plumtree Substation in Bethel to Ridgefield Junction in Redding. The proposed 9.3 mile project is outlined in Northeast Utilities letter of February 20, 1981.

The line under consideration dates to the 1940's according to NU representatives, and very few vestiges of the original access roads were found on this review. The company has not begun detailed engineering of this project, and representatives could only speculate as to actual access routes. Several will be obtainable from road crossings, although some of these, particularly at Limekiln Road, are bordered by wetlands. Company personnel were not able to identify at this time where access roads would require wetlands crossings. Many access routes may be obtained across adjoining property, depending on the amenability of owners, according to the company engineers.

The existing line is apparently not in immediate need of maintenance clearing. The new, taller structures and the high temperature clearance should minimize the need for extensive clearing along the right of way. Of course, clearing for access roads will be necessary, as the original roads, even if they are used, have revegetated. It is worthy of note that this right of way supports an abundant growth of the state flower, Mountain Laurel, Kalmia latifolia, which of course extends into the adjacent forest.

The line will likely require some danger tree removal, even though the cleared right of way will not be extended beyond the present width, which ranges up to 100 feet. Clearing methods on the right of way, and exactly where clearing will be required, have not yet been determined.

The line does not pass through densely populated areas other than the section from Plumtree Substation through the Bethel Education Park. Several homes along the remainder of the line have views of the structures or conductors, particularly at Indian Hill Road in Redding, where driveways cross the right of way. The canopy of the forest through which most of the line passes is slightly higher than the present structures, and only a few new structures are likely to appear significantly taller. According to Mr. Hill most replacements will be one-for-one in place, although he expects that some portions of the line will require different structure spacing.

The existing structures have had extension "bayonets" attached to allow an earlier uprating of the line, and some structures do appear juryrigged and somewhat busy. On the other hand, the new structures will be taller and have more steel supports for the cross arms, so the esthetic trade-off between the two is a matter of individual interpretation.

The line passes near or through several open space or natural areas, undeveloped wooded areas, or water company lands, although at this point in the project develop-

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ment crossing and adjacent land owners have not been identified.

Mr. Thompson expects the concentrated construction activity to take place in three stages, fall, 1981 and spring and fall of 1982, to avoid having the line out of service during peak demand periods. Other work, access roads, material delivery, etc., will be undertaken during the interim periods.

A final review of Petition No. 52, which also involved this line, was conducted concurrent with this review and will be the subject of a later report.

Christopher S. Wood
Executive Director